



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures: 16.18

Subject: Tennessee Foster Care Advocacy Program

Supersedes: Case Manager's Procedure
Manual, 1998

Local Policy: No
Local Procedures: No
Training Required: No

Approved by:

Effective date: 07/01/00

Revision date:

Application

To All Department of Children's Services Residential Case Managers.

Authority: TCA 37-5-106; 41-10-101 - 105

Policy

The Department of Children's Services shall permit an individual(s) (herein referred to as an advocate) selected by the membership of the Tennessee Foster Care Association to be educated concerning the procedures relevant to investigations of alleged abuse and neglect by the Department and the rights of the accused foster parent(s). Such advocate shall be permitted to be present at all portions of an investigation where the accused foster parent(s) are present and all communication received by an advocate therein shall be strictly confidential. Nothing contained within this item shall be construed to abrogate the provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated, title 37, Chapter 1, regarding procedures for investigation of child abuse and neglect and child sexual abuse by the Department of Children's Services and law enforcement agencies.

Procedures

A. Advocate responsibilities

1. An advocate shall be a specially trained foster parent, appointed by the President and Board of Directors of the Tennessee Foster Care Association and charged with the responsibility of interpreting the Department of Children's Services' policies and procedures and assisting foster parents in grievances and appeals with the department.

2. The advocate(s) must:
 - a) Attend meetings with foster parents upon requests.
 - b) Be responsible for accurate record-keeping of all contacts and the nature of the contacts and outcomes.
 - c) Have completed foster parent training.
 - d) Be in good standing with the Department of Children's Services.
 - e) Be a dues paying member of TFCA and meet all responsibilities and commitments made to TFCA as an active member.
 - f) Be a member of the association in their county (if one is available)
 - g) Completely fill in all parts of the advocate(s) application.
 - h) Have a letter of reference from the regional administrator accompanying the application.
 - i) Provide proof of attendance of annual required in-service training as specified in policy 16.7, *Foster Parent In-Service Training*.
 - j) Agree to attend the 15 hours of pre-service advocate training that shall be provided for the advocacy program and agree to attend 12 hours in-service training per year as long as they remain as an advocate for TFCA.
 - k) Receive a certificate of successful completion of 15 hours of in-service advocate training.
3. Advocates are certified volunteers and are considered as non-paid employees of the Department.

B. Selection of advocate

The advocate(s) shall be appointed by the president of the Tennessee Foster Care Association, with the approval of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Foster Care Association.

C. Training

1. Each advocate selected shall receive 15 hours of pre-service training, consisting of, but not limited to:
 - a) Child Protective Services policies and procedures
 - b) Risk Oriented Case Management
 - c) PATH training
 - d) Foster Care Board payments (ChipFins) information
 - e) Residential case manager's policies and procedures
 - f) Advocate protocol

- g) Communication techniques
 - h) Record-keeping
 - i) Foster Parent's Bill of Rights
2. The advocate(s) selected shall receive 12 hours of on-going in-service training per year as long as they are an active advocate(s) for their region.

D. Implementation

An advocate shall be recruited from the twelve regions to represent foster parents and to work with the regions in resolving problems and/or complaints.

Forms

None

Collateral Documents

None

Standards

None